



Let the People Choose

Courtesy of The Winnipeg Free Press

The three main political parties in the Manitoba election have each rejected the idea of sharing more taxing power with the City of Winnipeg and other municipalities, but there is still time for Mayor Sam Katz and other leaders to demand that they commit to holding a referendum on the issue after the election.

Municipal infrastructure is crumbling across Manitoba and our roads are not just an embarrassment, they are a threat to public safety. Ask anyone who's had to replace a wheel rim or pay for a front-end alignment.

After crime and health care, roads are among the public's major priorities. But at the current rate of repair and replacement, the deplorable state of affairs will never change.

The simplest solution is for the province to increase the provincial sales tax by one point (worth about \$240 million) and dedicate the funds to infrastructure. The Business Council of Manitoba, which represents the province's leading CEOs, has proposed that the PST be raised for a period of 10 years only, which would raise \$2.4 billion.

Under provincial law, any proposed increase in taxation, including the sales tax, must be approved in a referendum.

The legislation was intended to discourage tax increases, but it also provides the perfect cover for politicians who fear being blamed for picking the pockets of taxpayers.

Conservative Leader Hugh McFadyen, for example, has said his party is opposed to tax increases. Well, that's fine, but let the people decide the issue through a referendum.

If voters prefer to drive on uneven roads, that's their choice, but if they want something better and are prepared to pay a little more for it, that's also their right. A referendum is not always appropriate, but in this case, it is the perfect democratic instrument. Unfortunately, the mayor, who once promised to hound the Selinger government until it relented

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on the tax question, has shown little imagination in pursuing the city's long-term interests.

On the other hand, there is significant support in the community for a new tax arrangement. In addition to the Business Council, the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce has been sympathetic to the idea of a new deal for the city. A recent report by the Infrastructure Funding Council, composed of leading citizens, also promoted greater tax sharing. As well, 144 Manitoba municipalities -- almost 75 per cent -- have passed resolutions calling on the parties to agree to spend an extra one per cent of the PST on infrastructure.

In other words, it's not the usual suspects on the left demanding a tax increase.

The one-point solution is a far cry from the more elaborate and visionary new deal proposed by former mayor Glen Murray, who wanted a fundamental realignment of the city's political relationship with the province and more taxing powers that would have shifted the burden from property to user fees, frontage levies and new municipal taxes on hotel rooms, liquor, gas and electricity. It is also the minimum requirement for filling the holes in the city's infrastructure. So far, however, none of the three parties has tabled a realistic plan to reverse the rot and decay.

Mr. McFadyen told the editorial board of the Free Press on Friday he is prepared to look at giving the city more taxing and political authority in the future, but it's not an immediate priority for his party. "We need to clarify who does what and who is responsible for what and then make sure the city has the means to do its job," he said.

But it's not part of the Tory platform for this election, meaning the city's political and fiscal decrepitude won't change in the foreseeable future, regardless of which party is elected. It will continue to be dominated by a paternalistic province, or, as urban theorist Jane Jacobs once said, like a "country bumpkin" village.

Mayor Katz, the city's business leaders, municipal councillors outside Winnipeg and others who are fed up should get out their megaphones. There is still time to get commitments from the party leaders before the Oct. 4 election.



The MHCA Welcomes New Members !

Titan Environmental Containment

Juice Lambert
Box 9
777 Quest Road
Ile De Chenes, MB ROA OTO
Ph: (204) 878-3955
Cell: (204) 226-8702

Email: juice@titanenviro.ca
Additional Information: Specializes in the supply and installation of geomembrane liners, bolted steel tanks, and welded tanks. We partner with industries from coast to coast to provide a wide range of extremely high quality environmental products, along with cost effective solutions for your projects.



Harder Excavating Ltd.

Sheldon Harder
Box 23
Roseisle, MB ROG 1V0

Ph: (204) 828-3283
Cell: (204) 750-2173
Email: harder5@mymts.net
Additional Information: General contracting and excavating services for the construction industry.

Who Runs the City Today?

Courtesy of The Winnipeg Free Press

If anything puts paid to the naive idea that politicians are bound to reflect the common good, it's their stubborn refusal to heed demands for a war on Manitoba's battered highways, streets and sidewalks. The major parties have made promises worth hundreds of millions of dollars, including more cops the city did not request and can't afford, yet their commitment to infrastructure has been anemic at best.

The political response would be adequate if the public was content to stumble on cracked sidewalks and drive across an obstacle course of ruts and potholes, but every survey has shown good infrastructure is a major priority. In fact, the problem is so severe that business groups, which normally abhor tax increases of any type, have recommended raising the sales tax.

The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce says the province should give the city the authority to implement a civic sales tax for infrastructure -- thus protecting the province from political fallout, if there was any, while holding the mayor and council accountable.

The Business Council of Manitoba, which represents Manitoba's leading captains of industry and commerce, has urged the province to raise the provincial sales tax by one point for 10 years, subject to public approval through a referendum, which is required by law.

The Infrastructure Funding Council advocated a longer-term plan that also included an increase in the PST.

Mayor Sam Katz wants even less -- just one point of the sales tax, in addition to existing commitments -- but it's also too much for the major parties, particularly the Conservatives and the New Democrats, who prefer to set the civic agenda, rather than allowing the mayor and council to run their own affairs.

In an interview with the editorial board of the Free Press Tuesday, Premier Greg Selinger said citizens don't want an increase in taxes in exchange for safer roads, but he had no surveys to back up that claim.

He noted that infrastructure is a problem across Canada, which is true, but hardly a justification for not tackling the problem in Manitoba.

Mayor Sam Katz told reporters he doesn't buy the argument that the province can't afford to spend more on infrastructure. If the Conservatives and the NDP can both make promises worth billions of dollars, he said, then they can find the money for infrastructure. It's just a matter of priorities.

"What's the point of investing more money into health care if ambulances can't navigate our roads?" Mr. Katz asked. "Why pledge more money for community centres if we can't even walk on our sidewalks?" Why, indeed.

The mayor added he didn't even want the province's money for community clubs and police if it was going to burden the city with new costs.

But Selinger said his promises to the city come with permanent funding, as do many of the pledges from Conservative Leader Hugh McFadyen. It means whoever is elected, the province will assume greater and greater responsibility for programs and services, such as policing, that were mostly managed by the city in the past.

In other words, if you don't like public transit, or police and paramedic response times, if you don't like driving on dangerous roads, well, don't call your councillor, call the people on Broadway. They've found a way to garner votes in Winnipeg, while blurring the lines of accountability.

MHCA Sponsors Leadership Debate

The MHCA hosted the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce Leadership debate on September 22nd at the Winnipeg Convention Centre, with over 400 in attendance.

The debate focused on a variety of topics, including Manitoba's Revenue Model, Energy & the Environment, Transportation and Infrastructure, and Future Opportunities for Manitoba.

MHCA President Chris Lorenc spoke a few words and encouraged voters and party leaders to consider the opportunities for a strong economy for Manitoba and solutions and ideas for the infrastructure deficit facing the province.

The Manitoba Provincial election is on October 4th.



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City and AMM challenge Provincial candidates to make infrastructure a priority

Election pledges neglect focus on basic infrastructure

Winnipeg, September 27th –Winnipeg Mayor Sam Katz and AMM President Doug Dobrowolski again called on those seeking election in the upcoming Provincial election to make infrastructure investment a top priority.

Earlier this year, City Council passed a motion asking the Province of Manitoba to provide one point of the existing provincial sales tax (PST) over and above funds that are already received to be dedicated annually as a stable, reliable source of funding for municipal infrastructure.

So far according to media reports, over \$3 billion dollars has been pledged from all the political parties to entice the votes of Manitobans. As infrastructure continually remains a top priority for our citizens, it is disappointing to see that very little of those dollars promised actually address our infrastructure needs.

‘We’ve seen millions of dollars being promised for a variety of interests from those seeking office this election, but if you actually want to do something positive to improve the quality of life for our citizens, then step up and do what’s right and provide municipalities with a real funding source to address the priorities of the people who are electing you,’ said Winnipeg Mayor Sam Katz. ‘What’s the point of investing more money into health care if ambulances can’t navigate our roads? Why pledge more money for community centres if we can’t even walk on our sidewalks? Although there are many laudable priorities, we need to take care of the basics and first address our infrastructure needs to have a lasting impact and make a positive difference.’

‘The condition of our public infrastructure is deplorable, and municipalities need new revenue to even begin to address the problem,’ said President Dobrowolski. ‘But it is also personal. This issue affects Manitobans where they live. The lack of adequate infrastructure costs communities new business, it hurts economic development opportunities, and it affects our lives every day. It’s time for the leaders to make a serious commitment to our municipal infrastructure, because the consequences of doing nothing will be disastrous not only now but for future generations.’

This year’s Provincial budget claimed that a share of the PST would be provided to municipalities to address their infrastructure challenges. In reality, provincial funding from general revenue would now come from the PST, effectively repackaging money under a new name but from the same pot of money.

Manitobans go to the polls on Tuesday, October 4th.



The Global Feeding Frenzy

By Peter Hall, Vice-President and Chief Economist of Export Development Canada

Early in 2008, rising prices sparked widespread worries about food shortages in Southeast Asia. Further price increases ensued as households staged a run on local food supplies – creating the tangible appearance of a food crisis when in actual fact, food supplies were quite sufficient to meet the demands of the market. Fortunately, when flows resumed, calm was restored.

Scares like that get the analysts sharpening their pencils and musing on the dynamics of future demand and supply conditions in the food industry. This year's natural disasters have compromised the current world food supply, drawing down global inventories of basic staples, and fueling the nascent interest in this sensitive sector of the economy.

At issue is the rise of emerging markets. Sustained high growth has increased per capita incomes, and is swelling the ranks of the middle class at a dizzying pace. Brazil reports that its middle class is growing by about 5 million persons annually. India appears to be adding somewhere between 10 and 20 million to its middle class annually. And China has been cited to be adding as much as total Canadian population – over 30 million – to its middle class each year. Undoubtedly, the many other emerging markets experiencing faster growth are collectively adding millions of more to the global middle class cohort. The numbers, and the accompanying rise in purchasing power, defy description.

It is well known that when consumers cross over into the ranks of the middle class, there is a discernible change in consumption patterns. On balance, they increase overall consumption, but they also increase the quality of that consumption. And one of the first places they start is food. Meat consumption rises noticeably, putting significant additional pressure on food stocks.

Why? Meat is food-intensive food, in that it takes a lot of food – that otherwise might have been consumed by humans – to bulk up the meat for market. According to the USDA, it takes 7 kilos of grain to produce a single kilo of beef. Thus, a bushel of wheat could produce 42 loaves of bread (67,536 calories), about what is needed to feed a full-grown man for four weeks, or 3.9 kilos of beef (6,521 calories), enough to feed that same man for 2.6 days. This ten-fold intensity of food usage ultimately implies an exponential increase in global demand, differentiating food from the usage patterns of other commodities.



Can the world increase capacity to meet these demands? There are limitations to the supply of arable land, so much focus is on land usage. There is scope to expand current crop technology, increasing the productivity of land, but there are constraints, as regions like Europe have stringent rules on imports of genetically modified foodstuffs. Technical breakthroughs on crop production could help, but they have very long lead-times. At present, global supplies are being augmented by increased usage of leading-edge farm equipment, and by using fertilizer to boost production on more marginal lands.

Global population trends suggest strong opportunity for Canadian exporters. Canada is known for its advanced farm equipment, and we are an important producer of the essential ingredients of fertilizers. Both industries are seeing strong increases in exports, and face bright, long-term possibilities.

The bottom line? The global appetite for food is rising – good news for a 'bread-basket' nation like Canada, and good news for the agricultural machinery and fertilizer industries.



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SAFE Work Workshops

Injury Prevention Basics (New!)

Recommended for small to medium sized employers who are new to safety

The workshop provides a general overview of the legal requirements, financial benefits, key principles and basic components required to build a SAFE work environment in your workplace.

Information will include:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1) Changing perspectives | 4) Elements of a safety program |
| 2) Why have a safety program? | 5) Case studies |
| 3) SAFE: An injury prevention model | |

WCB and Return to Work Basics

The workshop provides an overview to WCB operations and return to work programs required to support injured workers and manage claims.

Information will include:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1) Rate setting | 4) Dispute resolution |
| 2) Reporting injuries | 5) Return to work obligations |
| 3) Decision making | 6) Elements of a return to work program |

Injury Prevention Basics:	Wednesday, October 12	8:30 - 4:30
WCB/RTW Basics:	Thursday, October 13	8:30 - 4:30

Location: Canway Inn & Suites, 1601 Main Street South, Dauphin, Manitoba

Who should attend?

- WCB Administrators
- Safety Reps
- Other personnel who manage WCB matters and/or return to work programs
- Union Reps
- Return to work Coordinators

Please direct questions or registration to Bonnie, 1-800-362-3340 ext 4501 or email bmarchan@wcb.mb.ca

RSVP Deadline: Friday, October 7, 2011

Space is limited and will be allocated on a first come, first serve basis.



WORKSAFELY COR™ Certificates Have Arrived!

WORKSAFELY Advisors now have new COR™ certificates to distribute to certified companies, showcasing their hard work and achievement of a successful, COR™ certified safety program! Contact your advisor today at 204-947-1379 for more information. Also, inquire about how to receive a set of site signs and COR™ banner!



WORKSAFELY MHCA

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Training Schedule



Register by:

- » Email: Denine Rodrigues at safety@mhca.mb.ca
- » Fax: 204-943-2279

Cancellation Policy:

The *WORKSAFELY* policy states cancellation must be made at least two business days in advance, otherwise full course fee charge will apply.

SEPTEMBER 2011	
September 12	COR™ Leadership
September 14	COR™ Principles
September 15	COR™ Auditor
September 19	Train the Trainer
September 21	WHMIS (1/2 day AM)/ TDG (1/2 Day PM)
September 22	COR™ Auditor Refresher (1/2 day AM)
September 23	Excavating & Trenching (1/2 day AM)
September 23	Flagperson (1/2 day PM)
September 23	First Aid 1 - CPR

Construction Safety Officer	
October 7	CSO Prep Course
October 28	CSO Exam

OCTOBER 2011	
October 3-4	COR™ Leadership
October 5	COR™ Principles
October 6-7	COR™ Auditor
October 11	Safe Work Procedures
October 12	Prime Contractor
October 13	Back Injury Prevention (1/2 day AM)
October 13	Fatigue Management (1/2 day PM)
October 14	Safety Administration (1/2 day AM)
October 14	Toolbox Talks
October 17-18	Train the Trainer
October 19	WHMIS (1/2 day AM)/ TDG (1/2 day PM)
October 20	COR™ Auditor Refresher (1/2 day AM)
October 21	Excavating & Trenching (1/2 day AM)
October 21	Flagperson (1/2 day PM)
October 21	First Aid 1 - CPR

REMINDER:
WORKSAFELY requires at least six people registered to deliver the course.

Customized training is available for your specific requirements.
 Call the *WORKSAFELY* Office at (204) 947-1379 for more information.